



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

June 6, 2012

Dr. Linda Meyer, Executive Director
Autism New Jersey
500 Horizon Drive, Suite 530
Robbinsville, New Jersey 08691

Dear Dr. Meyer:

The New Jersey Department of Education is in receipt of the travel waiver application you submitted on behalf of Autism New Jersey requesting a waiver of the prohibition on overnight travel in order to facilitate the hosting of the 30th Annual Conference planned for October 10 through October 12, 2012 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

As you are aware, N.J.S.A. 18A:11 -12 requires that boards of education must ensure that all school district travel expenditures are "in compliance with State travel payment guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury..." State Department of the Treasury *OMB Circular 11-05* Section X.B specifically prohibits reimbursement of in-State overnight travel. However, the circular authorizes the Commissioner of Education "to grant waivers for overnight travel for school board members and school district employees to attend in-State conferences pursuant to guidelines issued by the Department of Education," *OMB Circular 11-05 Section I.B.8*.

The Department's regulations at N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.11(c) authorize the Commissioner to grant overnight in-State travel waivers only in extremely limited circumstances, where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad and multidisciplinary in scope, comprised of content-rich educational programming with important professional development opportunities and/or required training. In addition, the sponsoring organization must demonstrate that the conference's content, structure, scheduling and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging. The travel regulations are posted on the Department's web site at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap23a.pdf>.

Pursuant to the regulations, waivers will not be granted for reimbursement of lodging prior to the first day of the event or after check-out time of the last day of the event. Moreover, waivers will be considered only where the sponsoring organization can demonstrate that the conference is broad and comprised of content-rich educational programming with important professional development opportunities and/or required training.

www.nj.gov/education

Dr. Linda Meyer

June 6, 2012

Page 2

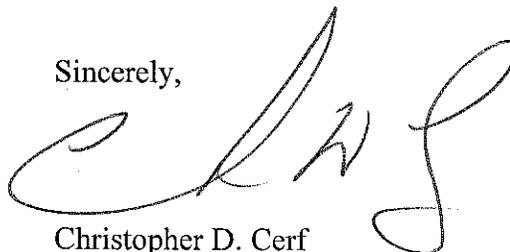
In addition, the sponsoring organization must demonstrate that the conference's content, structure, scheduling and anticipated attendance necessitate that it be held on multiple consecutive days with overnight lodging.

The Department has identified the scheduled programming on October 10, 2012 as a pre-conference workshop with a separate registration fee, and as such reimbursement of overnight lodging on the nights of October 9 and October 10 is not permitted. After carefully reviewing your submission, the Department finds that two days dedicated to conference programming comprising the 2012 Autism New Jersey Annual Conference (October 11 and 12) meets the criteria of the regulations. Specifically, I note that based upon the content of your submission, the conference will offer a comprehensive professional development opportunity of significance to New Jersey's teachers, administrators, and specialists such as child study team members. Furthermore, the structure, anticipated attendance, and scheduling of the conference necessitates a multiday event. For these reasons, the waiver request is granted. As a result of the waiver, school districts and charter schools will be able to offer reimbursement of lodging expenses to attendees. Such reimbursement is only for overnight lodging on October 11, 2012 provided that the remaining conditions delineated in this letter are met. Reimbursement for registration fees, mileage and meals, subject to the limitations and conditions set forth in *OMB Circular 11-05* and *OMB Circular 11-09*, may also be permissible. School districts and charter schools should ensure that they approve attendance only of board members, trustees, and employees whose duties are related to the purposes of the conference or who are required to attend to meet continuing education requirements as a condition of continued employment.

Moreover, please be advised that this waiver permitting reimbursement of in-State overnight lodging covers only those attendees whose home to event commute exceeds 50 miles. In other words, only those individuals whose one-way commute to the 30th Annual Autism New Jersey Conference planned for October 11 and 12, 2012 in Atlantic City, New Jersey exceeds 50 miles may obtain reimbursement from their school district for overnight lodging for October 11, 2012.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation of this effort to provide professional development opportunities to those who strive to provide quality public education in New Jersey. My best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Cerf
Acting Commissioner

CDC/MM/ta/Y:\Referrals\2012\Travel Waiver Referrals\Autism New Jersey\AutismNJ2012.docx

c: Executive County Superintendents

Senior Staff

Pam Castellanos